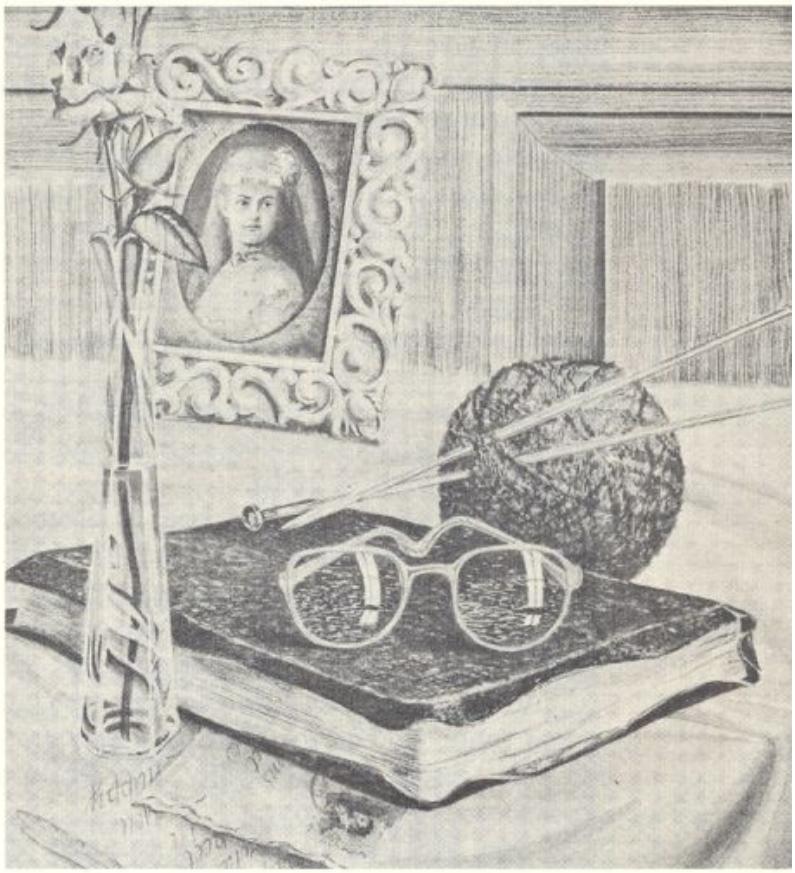
RESTORATION *Review*



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O Lord Jesus Christ, thou Word and Revelation of the Eeternal Father, come, we pray thee, take possession of our hearts and reign where thou hast right to reign. So fill our minds with the thought and our imaginations with the picture of thy love, that there may be in us no room for any desire that is discordant with thy holy will. Cleanse us, we pray thee, from all that may make us deaf to thy call or slow to obey it, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit art one God, blessed for ever. Amen.

(*by* WILLIAM TEMPLE)

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NOTES ON A WORLD TOUR

Leroy Garrett

"God so loved the world that he *gave* . . ."

My recent trip around the world gives me a deeper appreciation of the relationship between loving and giving. Surely it is the love that gives that is real, and certainly giving without loving is meaningless. If one loves enough, he will give, and give liberally, even himself if need be. God so loved that he gave his most precious gift. Somehow this takes on more meaning as one goes out to see the world with all its troubles.

I am not sure that I ever saw a really hungry person in America, and certainly not a starving one. I would be hard put to find a grave anywhere in this country where I could say, "This person starved to death." Our nation is well fed, if not over fed; our children can get an education; most of us are employed, and we can read and write; we have clean, comfortable clothes and houses that have several rooms; we even have electricity and running water, automobiles and automatic washers, radio and TV, tissue paper and soap and shoes. We have beds in which no more than two people have to sleep, and we have refrigerators that keep our food for days ahead — blessings that are no longer commonplace to one that has walked with those who live in Southeast Asia or India.

Besides all this we are free, at liberty to move about as we please. And free to think and to worship and to create, and even to criticize. America is indeed a blessed land, and after my recent experiences I shall never again take her for granted. The world that I see out my window looks different to me now. Even Denton, Texas, looks not quite the same, for even this small Texas city is just 14 hours from Saigon. My teaching at Texas Woman's University seems more vital now — there is a greater sense of urgency. There is neither time nor reason for mediocrity. The world needs us, the best of us. We must so love that we will give.

One does not have to go to India in order to know about the stark poverty that abounds there, but he feels much closer to it when he sees families sleeping on the sidewalks in front of the hotel where he is comfortably situated. One can read about the troubles of South Vietnam in the press, but it is different to walk the streets of Saigon and to hear for oneself the testimony of teachers when they say, "It seems to me that our only hope is the United States." Yes, we all understand that millions of children in this world are hungry, but that sober fact tugs at your conscience when a child tugs at your coat begging for food. We all know what war and political fratricide can do to a great people like the Chinese, but when one visits the refugees from Red China in Taipei and Hong Kong he learns more than what he finds in books.

True religion is a love story between God and man. Christianity is the story of how God so loved the world that he gave His own Son. God so loved *the world!* This great truth impressed itself upon me many times as I looked out upon this tragic, agonizing world of ours. My visit to Jerusalem was marred by the ugly fact that the Arabs and the Jews are indeed in a real war that occasionally gets quite hot, and one that has continued more or less since the days of Ishmael and Isaac. The millions of India struggle to keep from starving while they carry on their religious feuds and the more serious conflict with China. Saigon and most of Southeast Asia is nervous. So much of the world lives in fear and uncertainty as well as ignorance and poverty.

It is this troubled, neurotic world that God loves so much that he gave Himself for it. It is for a suffering humanity that our Lord died. We must look often at the Cross and remember that *God loves like that.* As children of God we too are to love the world. We may not be *of the world*, bur we are *in the world*, and our task is to leave it better than we found it. This involves falling in love with it. One of our poets has said, “God forgive us for looking at the world with a dry eye!”

We can hardly claim to be Christian if we have not cultivated a passion for the souls of men and a concern for their physical welfare. The child of God should think of his mission in this world as the alleviation of human suffering. And we can all stand where we are by making the Church of God what it ought to be as “the pillar and ground of the truth” and by building America to that level of excellence that will make her a benefactor to all nations as well as an example of freedom. “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” We cannot all enjoy the inspiration that comes through world travel, but those of us who are so blessed can share the experiences with others.

It was a Fulbright grant from the Department of State that enabled me to spend seven weeks in Free China (Taiwan) and to proceed from there on around the world. I visited twelve nations, including such famous cities as Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, Saigon, Bangkok, New Delhi, Beirut, Jerusalem, Cairo, Athens, Paris, Heidelberg, London, and Glasgow. I had audience with some important people, the most famous being Chiang Kai-Shek, while the most stimulating was Prof. William Barclay of the University of Glasgow. I swam in the Mediterranean at Beirut, floated in the Dead Sea in the wilderness of Judea, and waded out into the Jordan River until it got too deep. I saw the Suez Canal and the Red Sea from the air and took hikes alongside such famous waters as the Nile, the Seine, and the Thames.

I visited the renowned museums of Jerusalem, Cairo, Paris, and London, and lingered at such impressive structures as the pyramids in Egypt, the Taj Mahal in India, the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, the Acropolis and Parthenon in Athens, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and Westminster Abbey in London. But more important than *things* whether rivers or

mountains or buildings, are *ideas* and the people who hold them, and it is this aspect of *my* experiences around the world that I prefer to say the most about.

My stay in Tokyo was only a stopover of two days, but I made the most of this short time. The richest experience was the fellowship I enjoyed with the saints that met at the Ochanomizu Church of Christ, who were nearly all Japanese. Brother O. D. Bixler, who has been a missionary to Japan for over 40 years, ministers to this group. Not only does he speak good Japanese, but he understands the oriental mind and has great respect for it. He has great love for the Japanese and has made many personal sacrifices in order to tell them about the Christ. Reputedly he is premillennial, which means in view of the way our people practice Christianity that other of our workers in Japan will have little to do with him.

Even though Brother Bixler is responsible for the humble beginnings of some of the more highly publicized efforts in Japan, such as the Ibaraki Christian College, he has chosen to step aside and let others carry on the work, for, as he puts it, "There is plenty of work for all of us." If his brethren had rather not work with him in the service of the Lord, he is quite content to work for the Lord alone, and that without any ill will. "If you want to labor for Christ in this work, you take it and the Lord bless you in it. I'll go do something else." Such seems to be Bixler's attitude. He is a soft spoken, mild mannered, dedicated man who is willing to work quietly and unobtrusively — and he has been at it with great sacrifice since 1919 right there in Japan! Sister Bixler spoke of the temptations to return to the joys and comforts of America, but "we just couldn't do it, for we felt we would be divorcing the Lord."

The thought I had as I visited these fine people was this: *what kind of Christianity will the Japanese learn from those brethren of ours that have a religion that will not allow them to enjoy brotherhood with such dedicated Christians?* The oriental mind is too magnanimous for this kind of littleness.

It is common knowledge that Japan is now more westernized than any of the nations of the Far East. It is a moot question, however, as to how deeply this westernization penetrates Japanese culture. Some contend that it is only skin deep, that Japan is only superficially wearing an American facade, and that at heart the culture is grossly oriental and always will be. others believe that the country is truly evolving into a "western" republic, and that it is more than willing to bury and forget its imperialistic past.

I did not have "rhe feel of the orient" while in Tokyo. I was surprised to find it so much like the great cities of the West. The people are busy and prosperous, and their attitudes appear to be more like Americans than the Chinese. A big department store in Tokyo on a Sunday is much like a Gimble's on a Saturday. Christian churches in Japan are much the way they are in the West. Some Christian missionary efforts enjoy phenomenal success,

and there seems to be a spirit of revival in the air. It remains to be determined, however, just what effect Christianity is having upon the Japanese where it really counts.

The same is true of the American occupation. General MacArthur was wise in permitting the nation to retain its Emperor, even when our allies demanded that he abdicate. The emperor publicly denounced his divinity, but he remains as a symbol of 2700 years of Japanese tradition, and he will always he thought "divine" by the masses, but only in the sense that orientals think of men as gods, an idea that occidentals have never really understood. To the Japanese the emperor is somewhat like the pope to Roman Catholics, or something like what "Old Glory" is to a patriotic American. The Japanese have always been puzzled over our pledging allegiance to a piece of cloth and handling it with a reverence fit only for deity. In turn the Japanese are often seen dragging their flag in the dirt and handling it with utter indifference, to the dismay of Americans, for to them a flag is no more than decorative bunting. The emperor is their flag, and he is divine in that he symbolizes a national tradition that was born of the gods.

We really cannot tell yet about how much Japan has changed, or even what changes would be desirable. Few of us are ready to say that she should become like ourselves. My short visit brought me in contact with people that struck me as unusually bright and alert. These intelligent people would certainly make wonderful Christians, but I think we err if we expect Japan to become Christian in a western sense. We must not overlook the fact that a nation's religion and culture are closely related, and it may be that the kind of Christianity that the Japanese would cultivate in the light of their own history would be a better representation of what Jesus intended than what we in the West have come up with.

My Fulbright grant was for study in Taiwan, so it was here that I spent most of my time. For six weeks at Tunghai University in Taichung we sat with Chinese artists, politicians, scientists, educators, ministers of religion, philosophers, and historians. Some of it was exciting and vital; some of it was boring and inconsequential. As a whole it was a fabulous experience that left me with a deeper understanding of the complexity of world problems. There are no easy solutions, and some of them appear past finding out. Surely it will take us generations to unloose some of the tangles we are in. The so-called "China problem" is, for instance, so involved and so replete with our own political blunders that we have not yet begun to solve it. India is in such straits that one hundred years of concentrated problem-solving efforts will not be enough, and conditions there could well get worse before they get better. And it looks as if the cards are stacked against the Free World in South Vietnam and all of Southeast Asia, so much to that it is going to be very difficult to do anything that will really help. And so it is around this turbulent world of ours. My dentist got it right when he said to me the other day (under conditions that prevented my reply!): "Then I take it that you conclude that this old world is in real trouble."

(to be continued)

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THE GROUND OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

W. Carl Ketcherside

I am highly honored and profoundly humbled by the invitation to deliver this inaugural address at the revival of the Missouri Christian Lectureship. The theme to which I shall address myself is one of such magnitude, and my personal ability is so limited, that I can have no hope of fully developing the subject. I am among you as an explorer rather than an expounder; a researchist rather than a revealer. For this reason my approach cannot be dogmatic or arbitrary. I shall share with you those thoughts and ideas which have crystallized in my mind as a result of study and meditation. If you cannot concur in that which is offered, it will in no sense lessen my respect and regard for you as my brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall approach my thesis soberly and seriously for several reasons. First, the nature of the discussion is such as to forbid any other approach. A question of such far reaching consequences should not be dealt with lightly nor in a spirit of levity. Secondly, my audience is composed of those who have enlisted under the banner of One who culminated His mission on earth by an agonizing death. We are living testimonials to the greatest sacrifice the world has ever known. We are drawn together by the power in the blood. We are not on earth to amuse one another, but to serve one another in love. The Church of God has fallen upon serious times. We need to face up to our problems in serious fashion.

As an outline of what shall follow, I propose to discuss my subject under the following heads: (1) Definition of the term "fellowship"; (2) The nature of the fellowship in Christ Jesus; (3) Things not basic to fellowship; (4) The power which preserves fellowship.

Man is by nature a social being. He is a gregarious creature, that is, he flocks together with his kind. He is also a rational being, and because he is both social and rational, he requires some means of communication with his fellows. To transfer an idea from one mind to another demands a recognized medium of exchange. Since ideas are abstract, man has cultivated certain signs or symbols by which his ideas may be conveyed to others. These signs may be either oral or written. The former consists of certain sounds or combinations of sounds; the latter of certain transcribed characters or combinations of characters. But whether man speaks or writes, another can be said to understand him only to the degree that the symbols employed convey the same impression to the one addressed by ear or eye as occupied the attention of the speaker or writer.

The purpose of divine revelation is to convey to the hearts of men the thoughts of God. In order to accomplish this, God had to employ that means of communication which was familiar to man. Accordingly, the revelation of the divine mind was first given orally and them committed to writing. Those who were the human agents of revelation could assert, "But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). It is one thing to receive a revelation, but a wholly different thing to convey it. The means employed in doing this are specified in the next verse, "Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words."

Our task as students of divine revelation is not to secure the current meanings of the words employed by the Spirit, for words change their significance from one generation to another. Language is not dead but living; not static but active. Living forms alter with passing centuries. We dare not read *into* the sacred Scriptures what we wish; we must *get* out of them only what God placed in them. We must dedicate ourselves not only to the reading or perusal of the words spoken by the Spirit; but to discovering the meaning attached to those terms by the Spirit. It is with this objective we examine the word "fellowship."

DEFINITION OF FELLOWSHIP

Our English word, "fellowship," represents a combination of two forms. "Fellow" is found to be derived from the Old Norse *felagi,* comrade. This is from the root *felag,* partnership. "Ship" comes to us from the Anglo-Saxons. It is a noun-forming suffix added chiefly to nouns denoting persons. It denotes, as used in "fellowship," a state or condition, that is, a relationship. We should note two important things about this suffix. First, it is added to nouns, and by being thus added it forms new nouns. Second, it denotes a state or condition related to the original noun which generally denotes persons. We shall refer to these points later on in our thesis.

With one exception known to me, the word "fellowship" in the King James Version is used to translate the Greek word *koinonia,* or some form of this word. This term is derived from *koinon,* the word for "common." This word in both English and Greek has two meanings. It may signify that which belongs to the community at large, or the entire scope of life together in a society. It may also designate that which is ordinary, general, or commonplace as opposed to that which is rare and distinguished. It is in this sense it is used, for that which was not consecrated or *kosher,* in Acts 10:14.

The word *koinonia* expresses that state or condition in which persons hold things in common. It signifies a sharing, and it is that which is shared, or held in common, which creates the fellowship. A common synonym is "partnership." In Luke 5:7, 10, James and

John were called partners *(koinonoi)* of Simon Peter. The context establishes that this relationship existed in reference to the occupation of fishing. It is not to be supposed that they were in agreement upon all matters related to life, or even to fishing. Such was not essential to their *koinonia*, or partnership. They were partners because they were united in a common enterprise. They had a mutual objective and by contract or agreement, they pursued it together, sharing in whatever gains or losses accrued.

Because man is a social being and develops his unfolding personality best in association with others, God has ordained a society of the redeemed ones to which one is added when born again of the water and of the Spirit. This society is designated the ekklesia in the Greek language. The word is commonly translated "church" in our tongue. This is an unfortunate translation for several valid reasons. A much better one is "community." A community consists of those who are bound to each other by common ties. It is noteworthy that "unity" is a part of "community." The community which Jesus planted upon the rock is a fellowship. It is the koinonia of the redeemed ones, those who have responded to the call, thus are "the called out." It is the response to the call which creates the fellowship. This is what brings them together, and fellowship is togetherness elevated to spiritual status and sanctified by the blood of the slain Lamb of God.

THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP

There is no single English word adequate to portray the full depth of the Greek *koinonia*. The term “fellowhip” only approximates, and never exhausts the meaning. Unfortunately, it has taken on certain connotations which serve to confuse rather than to enlighten, so that the assumption that the English “fellowship” is exactly synonymous to the Greek *koinonia* does an injustice to the latter and militates against an understanding of all of its implications.

Even more to be deplored is the fact that among the heirs of the Restoration Movement there is not only a lack of understanding relative to the Greek terms, but a tragic misunderstanding of the English word. We have pointed out that the suffix “ship” is added to nouns and in the combination thus effected creates new noun forms. In spite of this, it is a common thing to hear the question, “Do you fellowship this person, or that one?” Among those with whom I am more closely allied, the question is frequently asked, “Do you fellowship the Christian Church?” Or it may be phrased, “Do you fellowship those who use instrumental music?” Regardless of how well informed such a querist may be regarding the arguments on instrumental music, he demonstrates a woeful ignorance of even the basic nature of fellowship.

We do not ask, “Do you partnership Mr. Brown?” or, “Do you companionship your wife?” or “Do you sonship your father?” On what grounds then do we justify such expressions as, “Do you fellowship such a person?” Fellowship is a state or relation. All

who enter into that state or relation are in the fellowship. It is not the result accruing from the state or relationship. It is the state! It is the relationship! Whatever brings one into the relationship brings him into the fellowship. That which initiates him into the community introduces him into the *koinonia*, or fellowship.

Another tragic error derives from overlooking the fact that the suffix is added to nouns denoting persons, in such firms as we are now considering. Fellowship is not a relation to things, but to persons. It does not signify a relation to things, either tangible or intangible, nor to ideas, views or interpretations. These may, or may not, form the basis of fellowship, but the fellowship is a relation sustained to each other by persons. The very word "fellow" shows that, for it means "a comrade or associate." In some colloquial usage, it actually means "a person."

In the dire state of division into which we have been betrayed by Satan, a great many *things* have been so elevated as to become tests of fellowship. In spite of all the writing I have done on the subject, I still receive letters plaintively inquiring if I fellowship missionary societies, instrumental music, theological seminaries, orphan homes, the pre-millennial interpretation, Bible classes, uninspired literature, national television and radio programs, leavened bread, individual cups, fermented wine, unfermented wine, quartettes, foot washing, and a host of other items and articles too numerous to mention — as they say on auction sale bills! I would not know how to fellowship any of these if I were inclined to do so, which I am not! I have personal convictions upon some, or all, of these disputed and controversial matters, but I do not doubt that the widespread ignorance on the subject of fellowship has worked greater evil than have all of these taken together, for it is that ignorance which has taken us apart!

The *koinonia* of which we speak is designated the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil. 2:1). It is used in conjunction with exhortation in Christ, consolation of love, tender mercies and compassions. I consider that the fellowship here specified is that which is secured by imbibing of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). "The unity of the Spirit" which we are enjoined to guard or maintain "In the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) results from the indwelling of the same Spirit in all who sustain a covenant relationship to God. Despite the diversities of gifts bestowed by the Spirit in a supernatural age, there was but one Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4). And despite our diversities of natural gifts we are all the temples of the same Spirit. Herein lies the secret of maintaining the fellowship, for it is a fellowship of the Spirit!

Fellowship is sharing. The life of fellowship is a life of sharing. Can we arrive at a statement which will properly portray the nature of the communion or fellowship we sustain through Christ? Such a statement must be broad enough to encompass our relationship to Deity as well as to the redeemed society of mankind. In 1 John 1:3 it is affirmed that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." In verse 7

it is said, “We have fellowship one with another.” Any definition of our relationship must point toward God and toward those who are in Christ. It is spiritually axiomatic that God always conditions His requirements of us upon what He has done for us. We love because He first loved us. We come to Him because He first came to us. We share with others what He has shared with us. It is upon this basis that we suggest that fellowship on the divine side is a union with Christ and a participation in His life through the indwelling Spirit; while on the human side it is a partnership of brethren whose mutual relations were transformed by the gift bestowed upon them.

THINGS NOT BASIC TO FELLOWSHIP

1. Fellowship is not equivalent to endorsement of another’s position or views. Endorsement is to be equated with sanction or approval. The Apostles were in fellowship. But in the same chapter where Paul mentions that Peter was one of the three who gave to him the right hand of fellowship, he says but two verses further on in the text, “But when Peter came to Antioch I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned” (Gal. 2:11). Paul did not sanction Peter’s course, but they were both in the fellowship. We endorse many things in many people with whom we are not in fellowship; we are in fellowship with many people whom we do not endorse in many things! We come into the fellowship of God and Christ, but they do not endorse all we think, say or do. Certainly God did not endorse all the Corinthian congregation did, but they were in the fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9).

2. Unanimity of opinion is not essential to fellowship. “The unity of the Spirit” is not contingent upon conformity in matters of opinion. Our relationship is one of community, not of conformity. In the exercise of our rational powers we will not all think alike. We differ in degree of intellect and power of perception. God has not made us mechanical robots. We are human beings, possessed of individuality. The personality is sacred, and that which seeks to destroy it rather than to provide for its fruition does despite to the image of God. Because of divergent backgrounds, varieties of experience, and differences in intellectual ability and aptitude, we can no more all think alike than we can all look alike. God, in His wisdom, did not make our fellowship in Christ Jesus contingent upon agreement in matters of opinion.

In Romans 14 we are informed that there were varied opinions held by those in the primitive congregation of saints. Instead of this constituting a basis of rejection and division, the specific instruction is given, “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.” This chapter stands as a constant rebuke to those who would create a test of fellowship out of a personal scruple or opinion. It is not true that we need to see everything alike to be one in Christ Jesus. The apostle says, “One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.” In our day, the one who believed he could eat anything would be called a sectarian by the other, and the

weak one would be branded as a hobbyist. A hobbyist is one who opposes what we have; a sectarian is one who has what we oppose.

To the apostle, neither was a sectarian or a hobbyist, but both were children of the same Father and servants of the same Master. The servant does not stand or fall because of the attitude or judgment of his fellow servants. “It is before his own master that he stands or falls.” The man who exalts his opinion as a test of fellowship, seeks to become a master and forgets that he is also merely a servant. We have too many who possess a Messiah-complex. They play at being God! But no one has the right to lord it over his brethren, either living or dead, who has not demonstrated his prerogative by first dying and then living again. “For to this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Rom. 14:9).

One who makes an opinion a test of fellowship, thereby formulates a creed, whether he admits it or not. The word "creed" comes from the Latin, Credo, I believe. Whatever one must believe to be in your fellowship, that is your creed. We have as many creeds as we have factions and parties among us and we have the latter precisely because we have the former. Perhaps no other group of people in the religious world today has as many unwritten creeds as do those who are the heirs of the Restoration Movement. Certainly few others are as intolerant in the defense of their formularies and rubrics. God did not make conformity in opinion the ground of our fellowship. Such a course in its ultimate is detrimental to and destructive of all fellowship.

Men will reason and those who do so will reach conclusions and arrive at opinions. But we do not all reason alike. All reasoning must be predicated upon our previous accumulation of knowledge. No one can reason from a concept he has not formed nor from facts to which he has had no access. No two persons on earth are exactly alike, either physically or mentally. No two persons know exactly the same things at the same time. It is obvious, then, that no two will reason exactly alike on all matters. Opinions will vary. It is well that they do, for this is the foundation of all research, investigation and invention. In the fellowship of saints it is made the basis for cultivation of patience, forbearance and tolerance. These are Christian virtues. Instead of diversity of opinion destroying character, it is a contributing factor to its growth upon the part of those who respect brotherhood more than opinion, and regard the persons of the redeemed ones as of more value than things!

Ours is to be a unity of transformity, not of conformity. We are transformed by the renewal of our minds. This does not indicate that the transformed ones must be subjected to coercion, pressure and domination of any ruling hierarchy, clique, school, or faction to fit a prejudicial party pattern. In coming to Christ it is not our wills that are crushed, but our hearts that are broken. The sovereignty of human will is never disregarded by God. The dignity of the individual is never destroyed. In the apostolate, called, qualified and

commissioned by Jesus Himself, each man retained his own individuality and distinctive personality. They constituted a fellowship by their mutual relationship unto Him.

3. Equality in attainment of spiritual knowledge is not the foundation for fellowship. In the family of God, as in the natural family, there are babes, young men and fathers. There are those who are well informed and those who are ill informed. We tend to make our own attainments the criterion for judging all others. That which took us a decade to learn, we expect others to understand and fully accept in ten minutes.

The Christian life is a walk. This implies steady and methodical progress toward the goal. But we are not walking together in a clump or cluster so far as our knowledge is concerned. We are strung out along the road. Fellowship has not so much to do with the point we have reached on the road, but the direction we are facing. All who are in the road and are facing and walking in the same direction, are in the fellowship of the Spirit.

Life is a growth. The very idea of growth bespeaks variety and alternation. We do not grow in spiritual knowledge by a mushroom method, springing up overnight. There are few spiritual giants as there are but few physical giants. We should not be like the mythical highwayman, Procrustes, and force everyone to fit our iron bedstead. Not every child in a family reaches the same height and weight. We do not expect such of our children. We do not think it strange that those of the same parentage and who eat the same physical diet, vary in some respects. Nor should we think it peculiar if the same be true of those in the spiritual family.

Just as the farmer in Palestine had to wait with patience for the early and latter rain, so those of us who plant the seed of the kingdom have need of patience. Nothing is more clearly taught than the fact that those who have been made members of the body as it pleases God will not all be alike. There are members “which seem to be more feeble” (1 Cor. 12:22); “less honorable and uncomely” (verse 23). These are not to be rejected or refused because they do not measure up from a utilitarian standpoint. Instead, we are to bestow more abundant honor upon them, and the reason is “that there should be no schism in the body” (verse 25). Surely this implies that one cause of division is the disregard for those who are feeble. It is this very fact which makes love so imperative as a corrective for our ills.

None of us know all we should about the revelation of God. We have nothing of which to boast. “If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know.” We have been long on pride and short on love. Knowledge of God’s Word is not a substitute for brotherly love. We need to revise our thinking and cease to regard our own knowledge as a sacred canon for others. We will have different degrees of spiritual knowledge and we must be kindly dispositioned toward those who are striving to know, but have not yet learned. Education is a slow process.

Against my reasoning, it is urged that the Scriptures do set up agreement and conformity as the basis of fellowship. We dare not postulate a position which violates the revelation of God. Therefore, without evasiveness or equivocation, we must examine our thinking in the light of the revealed word. It is only fair to state that I have been conducting a crusade for unity of all believers in the Christ for several years. Before I began writing upon this important theme, I did research in God's Word for many months. I sought to anticipate every argument which would be brought to bear upon my presentation. I examined every Scripture which I thought might be quoted in opposition, and satisfied my mind that what I had to offer would not violate God's revelation. I can truthfully say that during all of the questioning I have faced in the interim, not one Scripture has been presented which I had not previously scrutinized carefully.

One of the frequently quoted passages is Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" This has been made the basis for countless sermons on unity. It serves as an example of the folly and fallaciousness which often accompanies textual preaching. Origen, who has been called the father, of the sermon, contributed far more to the ignorance of the saints than to their enlightenment by foisting the sermonic style upon them.

Our own experience demonstrates that two can walk together without being agreed upon a lot of things. I walk together with many, but not in complete agreement with any. My wife and I do not always agree, but we walk together. Recently, in a question period, a young preacher arose and asked, "Do I understand that you are in fellowship with those with whom you disagree?" I replied, "They are the only ones with whom I am in fellowship. There are no others." Certainly the apostles walked with Jesus and with each other, but they were frequently in disagreement. It is not uncommon to read, "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest" (Luke 9:46). Partnership is not conditioned upon sameness, nor community upon conformity.

Amos was not providing a dissertation upon the foundation of fellowship. He was a "herdsman and dresser of sycamore-trees" who was divinely sent from a small village south of Jerusalem to cry out against the ten-tribe kingdom to the north. To justify what appeared to be presumption and audacity, he gives a series of examples illustrating the principles of cause and effect. These are presented in question form. The first one was, "Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?" This is the Revised Standard Version rendering. It is in harmony with the original Hebrew wording, the context and common sense. The idea was that, in the days of Amos, when you saw two pilgrims or wayfarers traveling together, you could reasonably assume they had made an appointment. Thus, when you heard a prophet declaiming against a certain people, you knew God had a message for them. The conclusion of the sequence is, "The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

The making of an appointment to come together does not necessarily signify agreement. I knew two men who made an appointment to fight. Men might make an appointment to take a walk to continue an argument. That an appointment to meet together does not in itself imply agreement is evidenced by the average business meeting of the congregations. The whole truth is that there is no other unity possible of attainment than that of diversity. He who seeks for any other pursues a will-o'-the-wisp and will end up creating more division than peace.

Advocates of unanimity frequently refer to 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." It is well to remember that this was spoken to those who were in fellowship, for the preceding verse declares, "God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The admonition to "speak the same thing" was not written to produce fellowship. This provides an opportunity to make a statement of principle, the discovery of which has been invaluable to me in my research. Fellowship is not a fruit of agreement, but agreement is a fruit of fellowship. We do not enter the fellowship because we agree upon all things, but we strive toward agreement on things because we are in fellowship.

But what is meant by the expression, "That ye all speak the same thing?" Does it refer to endless repetition of the same words? Does it enjoin monotonous and changeless language, or stereotyped and invariable expression? We do not think so. This would stifle the vibrancy and life of the Christian way and reduce us to the use of dreary parrot-like phraseology. As is so frequently the case, the answer lies in the context. It is evident that the Corinthians, although in the fellowship, were not speaking the same thing. If we can find out what they were saying, we will know that this admonition was in direct contrast thereto. Paul was seeking to correct an existing condition by his instruction. What was that condition?

The next verse defines it. "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." It is plain that the expression, "That ye all speak the same thing" was to remedy a state of contention in which they were saying different things. What were they saying? Verse 12 reads, "Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, "I am of Paul; and I of Cephas; and I of Apollos; and I of Christ." The encouragement to speak the same thing was related to the schismatic and factional affirmations growing out of the party spirit and creating an ever-increasing area of contentions. It is for this reason James Moffatt gives the rendering, "Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to stop these party cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude." We believe that this more nearly expresses the sentiment of the Apostle.

The Authentic Version renders the passage, “Now in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I urge you, brothers, all to hold together and not to have divisions among yourselves, but to accommodate yourselves to the self-same out-look and viewpoint.” The Cententary Translation reads, “Now I beg you, brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to speak in accord, all of you, and to have no divisions among you, but to be knit together in a common mind and temper.” You will observe that it is the attitude, view point and outlook which are stressed in these. And it is our attitude which will maintain us in fellowship when differences of opinion and interpretation confront us.

To speak the same thing is but another way of urging them to cease their party cries. Each faction was announcing the name of its purported leader. These divergent names and parties separated and segregated God’s people. That is why they are condemned with such strength and boldness. And we need to quit raising our party cries and factional creeds today. It is in this sense we should speak the same thing, reaffirming our common ties of brotherhood, regardless of our unfortunate divergencies of opinion. The admonition of Paul is valuable, but it needs to be correctly interpreted and applied.

Another passage frequently cited is Romans 15:5, 6: “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is urged by apologists for unity based upon absolute conformity that the terms “like-minded” and “one mouth” forbid and preclude differences of opinion. They fail to realize that such an interpretation would make Paul inconsistent with himself. The preceding chapter is devoted to pointing out that the saints do not all hold the same opinions and need not do so. Its very purpose is to forbid making a test of fellowship out of opinions. “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.

What is meant by being “like-minded?” The Revised Standard Version reads, “May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Moffatt renders the passage, “May the God who inspires steadfastness and encouragement grant you such harmony with one another, after Christ Jesus, that you may unite in a chorus of praise and glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Harmony does not require sameness. A symphony orchestra is composed of many instruments. These do not all sound the same notes simultaneously. But they do not produce discord because they complement each other. They merge and blend in a composition because they are apposite — not opposite — to each other. The exhortations to like-mindedness have to do with the establishment and maintenance of harmony in our relationships. What we have said of this passage is explanatory of all of the others

employing the same, or kindred, expressions. It is not necessary to review them one by one, for they are all in the same category.

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

We have said that fellowship in Christ is that state or relation into which we have been inducted by proper response to the call of God issued in the Good News. “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). The fellowship of our Lord is entered in response to a call issued by God. Whatever is required to make proper response to that call is all that is required to enter the fellowship.

That we are called by the Gospel will not be questioned by any among us. The Apostle confirms this in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14. “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this He called you through our Gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is evident, then, that if we enter into the fellowship by proper response to the call of God, and if the call is issued in and through the Gospel, whatever is a proper response to the Gospel is obedience to its demands upon the alien sinner who believes the proclamation. “But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” (Romans 10:16). This indicates there must be a report made, it must be believed, and that belief must motivate the honest hearer to obedience. This agrees with the statement of Paul, who affirms that through Christ “we have received grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.” (Romans 1:5).

Obedience to the Gospel is the proper response to the call of God which brings one into the fellowship. What is entailed in that obedience? Jesus defines it in His final commission to His ambassadors. “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” What must one believe in order to be saved or admitted to the fellowship? On this matter, the record is clear. “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Life comes through belief, and that which must be believed in order to life, is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. On this foundation fact, the community of Christ, the *ekklesia* of God, has been planted.

The belief of one fact and the obedience of one act brings one into a state of salvation, and thus into the fellowship of all the saints. This is not a new concept to those who are heirs of the Restoration movement. It was enunciated as the very groundwork of that movement by Alexander Campbell in these words:

"But the grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this: *that the belief of one fact*, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes to salvation. The belief of this *one fact*, and submission *to one institution* expressive of it, is all that is required of heaven to admission into the church." Lest there be any controversy over the implication of these remarks, Campbell says in the adjacent context, "The one fact is expressed in a single proposition — that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah," and again, "The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Whatever is requisite to bring one into relationship with God, we certainly are distinctly told to welcome all whom Christ receives. We have no right to make anything a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Therefore, every sincere believer in the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus Christ, and who is immersed in water upon the basis of that faith is God's child and my brother.

Fellowship is a mutual relation of those who are in covenant relationship with God. It is brotherhood. Brotherhood is not produced by agreement upon matters of opinion, but by a common fatherhood. Fellowship is conditioned upon sonship; brotherhood is conditioned upon fatherhood. Those who have the same father and mother are brothers because of origin and should recognize the fact. "For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). We can no more choose our spiritual brethren than we can our fleshly brothers. But a rejection of anyone as a brother who has been begotten by our Father is not only a rebuff of that one, but an insult to the Father.

Apparently the danger in their reasoning has never occurred to many who today equate fellowship with absolute endorsement, unanimity of opinion, perfection in knowledge, or understanding of the Scriptures. Instead of hurting their brethren, they are actually signing their own death warrant and sealing their personal writ of damnation. It is a divine principle, "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." Now if one must understand all that we do and have as much knowledge as ourselves as a condition of fellowship, then for us to be in the fellowship of God and Christ we must know and understand all that they do. I hardly think that many of my brethren would affirm that they possess infinite knowledge of wisdom, but to deny it would be to make it impossible for them to be in fellowship with God, themselves being witness.

Our God is merciful and kind. His love is a divine philanthropy, a love of mankind, and not love for a particular kind of man. It is His will that all should be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth. If fellowship with God requires as a term of admission a

knowledge of the philosophy of the Christian way, multitudes of humble souls will be damned without an opportunity for salvation. Upon such a condition, unity can never be achieved, and the prayer of Jesus becomes, not an ideal for which to strive, but a cruel mockery of the deepest yearning within our souls. However, salvation from sins and entrance into the fellowship have been predicated upon faith — not upon knowledge or opinion! And the faith required is belief in a person, not merely that he lived or died, but that he was the Son of God.

Faith must manifest itself. Like love, it must be expressed. It is an activating force in the heart. Faith in Jesus as God's Son seeks a demonstration which will prove that the penitent sinner is submissive to the will of God. Divine wisdom has provided one act of obedience which strips us of pride and arrogance. That act is immersion of the body in water. When one who believes the cardinal fact of the Good News and submits to immersion of his person in water because of his faith, he rises to walk in a new life, for he is born with a new relationship, not only with God and Christ, but with all others whom they have received on the same basis. It is our contention that we have no right to inquire of any person who presents himself for baptism, concerning his views or opinions relative to the theological questions which have disturbed the ecclesiastical domain for centuries.

The only question we can properly ask is relative to faith in the Sonship of the Nazarene. "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" An affirmative reply to this indicates the suitability of such a person for immersion into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He may hold a hundred opinions that are peculiar, bizarre and strange to the rest of us, but this in no sense affects his entrance into the fellowship with us. He may alter and amend his opinions as he studies and matures, and such alterations and amendments, so long as they do not undermine his faith in Jesus, should not affect our relationship with him in Jesus. We must face up to the sad fact that this has not always been the basis of our procedure in the past. We have grown up in a factional atmosphere. We have inherited partisan prejudices and traditional positions. We have regarded as our brethren only those who agreed with us upon certain things which we have elevated and emphasized. We have sought to unChristianize and drive from us those who did not concur with all of our opinions.

It seems but fair that whatever items we intend to employ as the basis of fellowship should be included in our original catechizing of a candidate for immersion. We should not deceive one into thinking that all he needs to believe in order to be regarded as a brother is that Jesus is the Son of God, then after baptism begin to attach riders or codicils to our agreement. If we do not intend to regard as a brother one who thinks that instrumental music is justified in the corporate worship of the saints, we should ask, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that instrumental music in the worship is a sin?" If we do not propose to regard as brothers those who hold a specific view as to the

manner of the coming of our Lord, we should ask, “Do you belive that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and oppose the idea of a premillenial coming?”

It is hypocritical to proclaim that we have no creed but Christ, then after men have been induced to come in among us upon that basis, to instigate other bases and tests, and hound out upon a wholly different principle those who were received upon their acceptance of the foundation we originally announced. This is creedalism with a vengeance, sheathing its claws and purring with kindness, until time for the dispatch of the unsuspecting victim. We should either write out a bill of particulars and demands to which prospective members must subscribe, or cease to evaluate fellowship and brotherhood upon such addenda and appendices.

By personal conviction I am opposed to the use of instrumental music in the corporate worship of the saints. I am also opposed to the premillennial interpretation of the new covenant Scriptures, as that term is commonly employed. But I refuse to be a member in, or champion of, an anti-instrument *party,* or a post-millennial *party.* I am not a brother to men because they cannot conscientiously worship where an instrument is used; and for that reason I am not an enemy to those who can. They are all my brethren, but not because of a position on instrumental music, missionary societies, the millennial interpretation, classes, cups, and all that other host of things which has been allowed to sunder, sever and split us into divergent groups. We are brothers because we have been born into the same family. We have the same parents. We recognize a common Father. “Jerusalem which is from above is the mother of us all.”

The brotherhood to which I belong is not limited to the subscribers of a certain paper, the members of a specific faction, nor to those whose names appear in a certain yearbook or directory. All of these means of classifying and categorizing are factional in the final analysis. They betray our fears and are symptoms of childishness and immaturity. The brotherhood of which I am a part knows no limits set by any man or group of men. It embraces and enfolds all whom God has received. It is not limited to those who are affiliated with some section, segment or splinter of the Restoration Movement. It may include many who never heard of it. It is a catholic brotherhood, universal in scope, consisting of all on earth, without exception, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, for its communion is “the fellowship of the Spirit.”

I cannot choose my brethren. Only the Father can do that. I can welcome them, and if they are His children I *must* welcome them or insult Him by refusing and rejecting them. Does this approach to fellowship seem too broad? If so, the fault should be assessed against God. Within the bounds of my feeble and finite knowledge and judgment I accept no one whom he rejects, and reject no one whom he accepts. So long as one is as exclusive as God, can he be charged with being too inclusive? I hold that the flock of God is scattered over the sectarian hills and that our task is to reaffirm in our generation the truth

concerning fellowship so that sectarianism may lose its attractiveness and the full glory and beauty of the unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus may shine forth and be the magnet to draw us all together.

We face grave problems and serious questions in any attempt to implement this ideal. Not the least of these has to do with the place which baptism occupies in our thinking. What shall we do concerning those whose piety and moral life is above reproach, but who have never been immersed? Will their lack of understanding, or their ignorance of this one phase of the divine will debar them from that fraternity in which we are participants?

In any discussion of such questions we should not forget that the problem has grown out of the great apostasy. The primitive church of God was troubled and perplexed by many serious problems, but this was not one of them. The action of baptism was not a topic of dispute in the apostolic community. The necessity of baptism was never called into question. Those who composed the community of believers had accepted the authority of Jesus in all spiritual matters. They acknowledged His Lordship in their lives. It never occurred to them to question what He commanded. They knew that baptism was a burial, and having been told by Jesus that belief and baptism were prerequisites to salvation, they would as soon have tried to please God without faith as without baptism. Regardless of the rationalization of modern philosophy, it must be admitted that those who composed the primitive *ekklesia* were all immersed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The fellowship, or brotherhood, consisted only of such as gladly received the Word and were immersed. If our intention is to restore the primitive order, then we must begin with this premise.

It should be remembered, however, that what we say has to do with admission to the fellowship of the saints, and not to the question of ultimate salvation. What God may do with those who are involuntarily ignorant of the necessity of immersion as an inductive act is a matter for divine decision. He has not seen fit to disclose unto us what course He will pursue in every case that comes before Him. When all things were put under Christ, God excepted Himself. His grace is not subject to the will revealed to those of us under the jurisdiction of His Son. We should not seek to bind God by the precepts which He gave to govern us, for we are human and He is divine. But those who are in Christ Jesus arrive there by being baptized into Christ. On this point the revelation is clear and indisputable. It is the *koinonia*, or fellowship, of those who are in Christ with which we are concerned.

Baptism is no light matter as viewed in the revelation of God. It is one of the seven items in the catalog of things essential to “the unity of the Spirit.” This unity is predicated upon the oneness involved in these items. The same passage which declares there is “one Body, one Spirit, one God, and one Lord,” just as positively affirms that there is one baptism. Now baptism is an initiatory act. It brings us into the fellowship of the saints. It is a divine appointment resting upon divine authority. It is a positive ordinance and not a moral one, thus is not subject to human judgment in its application to varied circumstances

or conditions. We cannot create the terms of admission to the fellowship. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign. He has either authorized baptism as one of those terms, or He has not. If He has, no one dare alter, amend, or omit it; if He has not, baptism is a mere useless formality divested of the only authority which could possibly make it valid.

In order to understand the principles involved and to establish the reasoning upon which I base my conclusion that immersion is essential to entrance into the fellowship of the saints, I have set forth six points which I believe to be worthy of study and examination in this connection:

1. In an absolute monarchy the terms of admission to citizenship, or fellowship, must be established by the Sovereign and accepted and enforced by the citizens in conformity with the will of the Sovereign as revealed.

The kingdom of God's dear Son is a monarchy. He is a King of kings. He is a Lord of lords. His authority is absolute. He affirms, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:19, 20). The ambassador to the Gentiles declares that God "hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). To this there is but one exception, the Father who placed all things under him (1 Cor. 15:27, 28). The citizens have no authority to determine the basis of fellowship They cannot set up rules revealed by the King. As loyal subjects they can only hear the expressed will of the Sovereign and obey it!

2. Any wilful attempt upon the part of the citizens of such a monarchy to ignore, alter or amend the terms of fellowship prescribed by the Sovereign, will constitute a revolt against his authority, and must be regarded as an act of rebellion.

No authority over citizens can be absolute when its decrees are subject to the approval or ratification of the citizens before becoming the accepted rule. No authority can be absolute when its decrees may be vetoed or repealed by popular vote. It follows without question that a refusal of the citizenry to accept as final the regulation imposed by proper authority constitutes rebellion, and in its ultimate can only result in the overthrow of such authority and the creation of a state of anarchy. This generally stems from pride and misplaced conviction. So Paul writes:

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes and words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

3. In any commonwealth composed of members called out of a previous state or condition, necessity requires that there be a law of naturalization, and such law must provide a specific point at which the applicant for citizenship achieves transition from his

former state to the new state, and at which point he becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges and prerogatives of the new state.

The wisdom of this principle will be especially evidenced in those cases where the state that is abandoned is at war with the one in which the subject seeks to enlist or requests citizenship. Not all political states are rivals, not all are at odds with each other. There are many sovereign nations which continue in peaceful coexistence. But in the spiritual realm there are but two kingdoms which embrace the universe of responsible mankind. These are antithetical to each other. They are engaged in incessant warfare. They are so diametrically opposed to each other in principle that there can never be a truce proposed between them.

When one responds to the invitation of the Sovereign of light, he must be translated from the power of darkness. There must be a line to cross which marks the border between the two states. Those on one side are not in the Kingdom of God's dear Son. They are not in the territory constituting His domain. Those who cross that line in response to His terms promising amnesty are citizens. Since there are certain privileges and rights accruing only to citizens it is essential that one know at exactly what point he is entitled to these. Failure to know would deprive one who was a citizen from exercise of His powers, or encourage one who was not a citizen to incur divine displeasure by intrusion upon a realm that was not his. The Apostle writes:

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

It seems apparent that there is a state in which one was not an heir, and another state in which he became a partaker of the inheritance of the saints; there was a state in which he lived under the power of darkness, and another kingdom into which he was introduced; there was a time when his sins were not yet forgiven, and a time when those sins were remitted. It is our conviction that at the point where past sins are remitted, one is fitted to become a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and at that point becomes a citizen in the kingdom of the Son. The process by which one crosses the line is called "translation." In its original sense this word signified to remove or transport from one place to another. This prepares us for our next point of consideration.

4. In a commonwealth depending for existence upon a mutual regard of the citizens for the authority of the Sovereign and a mutual respect for each other, it is imperative that all be able to determine who are citizens, and the acceptance of those who are not, will destroy the commonwealth by disregard for authority at the very entrance to the commonwealth, and by infiltration of those who do not regard the will of the Sovereign as supreme in their conduct.

There is every indication that many who are heirs of the Restoration movement in these days have never been indoctrinated in the fundamental aspects of the kingdom of heaven. They are addicted to the parroting of noble phrases and the mouthing of majestic mottoes which are devoid of any real meaning in their own lives. Many proclaim that the kingdom is an absolute monarchy and proceed as if it were a loosely organized democracy. They affirm that all power is given unto Jesus, then seek to exercise it during his absence from the earth. It must be always remembered that in matters involving absolute authority, personal ambition and sentiment have no place. It is not a matter of what the subject seeks, but of what the Sovereign says.

In a state dependent upon mutual regard for authority and mutual love for those under that authority, nothing should be clearer or plainer than the means of identification of the citizenry. If those who are accepted by the monarch as citizens are rejected by the other subjects it is evident that the authority of the Sovereign is trampled underfoot; if those regarded by the Sovereign as aliens are invited to participate as citizens, not only will his authority be disregarded but all lines of demarcation will eventually be removed, and there will be an infiltration of those who are introduced on the very basis of their non-submission to authority, thus the kingdom will be thrown into confusion in our generation. The fact that this is done under the plea of compassion, the weakness and fallibility of human judgment, or misplaced love and sentiment toward others, in no way offsets the result or the responsibility for producing it.

5. Inasmuch as finite creatures are unable to read the hearts of men, or to judge the degree or extent of faith of others in a proposition; a community or fellowship established upon faith must have a visible and overt act which may serve as a test of such faith, and thus of admissibility to the fellowship, and such an act must be specific and established by decree of the Sovereign.

The foundation of the *ekklesia* of God is the proposition that the Nazarene is the Messiah, the Son of God. This is clear from the announcement of Jesus that he would plant His community upon that rock, when it was affirmed by Simon Peter. The nature of the foundation must be adapted to the nature of the structure it is designed to support. Spiritual institutions are built upon spiritual principles. It is the faith of individuals in this principle which introduces them as living stones into the divine structure. Unless faith is demonstrated or expressed those who are human cannot determine its extent or worthiness in the hearts of others. God can read the hearts of men and can anticipate their response, but we cannot. It is obvious that there must either by an observable act as an expression of faith upon which we may predicate divine acceptance, or we will not know whom to receive. It is our conviction, as it is that of the religious world generally, that the act established by divine authority is baptism. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”

6. A law of naturalization established as an ordinance of induction or translation must be such that all who are entitled to the privileges it is intended to convey may freely comply with its requirements, and a proper subject complying with the ordinance is inducted into the state of which the ordinance is intended to induct, whether he understands the design or not.

This is an important principle to those of us who seek to restore the ancient order of the church of God. A proper understanding of it will enable us to avoid one of the great pitfalls of the sectarian or party spirit. If we substitute knowledge of the design of baptism for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will abort the will of God and set up a human creed of our own contrivance. One becomes a proper subject for baptism upon belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He may be ignorant of many things with reference to the blessings accruing from his obedience to the act, or as to the time of their conferral, but his ignorance does not negate the promise of God.

While we are saddened by the sectarian divisions about us, we must not conclude that we can overthrow sectarianism by becoming sectarian. We will not restore unity to the children of God by denying that any child of God is our brother, but by an acknowledgment of the tie that binds in spite of our unfortunate separation. Every person who has been immersed into Christ upon the basis of his faith in Christ is my brother, and I have an invisible tie of affinity running from my heart to his heart through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Summarizing this portion of my thesis, and in harmony with the previously stated conviction that I dare nor make anything a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation, it is my personal position that the ground of fellowship is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ expressed in obedience in the immersion of the believer. Faith and obedience — these constitute the foundation of our fellowship in him, for whatever is required to bring us into Christ, will also bring us into that relation with all others in Jesus which is called fellowship.

THE POWER WHICH PRESERVES FELLOWSHIP

This brings me to the final point in my analysis. We must face up to the fact that we are members of a movement which has been rent and torn. Is there a power of sufficient strength to draw us together again, and having achieved that objective, to hold us together? There would be little gained for the present and nothing of permanent value in coming together only to cleave asunder in new outbreaks. If there is no such power we are doomed to continue in an ever worsening state of dissension and strife with an intensification of all the evils resulting from such a condition.

It seems presumptuous for one of my limitations to suggest that there is a remedy when so many other really capable diagnosticians have given up in despair. But “fools rush in where angels fear to tread” and thus I venture to suggest that there is hope in this dark

hour. That hope lies in *agape*. This is a term employed only in divine revelation to designate an enduring and indestructible force of which it is affirmed that it outlasts anything else. Despite the versatility of the Greek language, this term does not appear in the classics. The philosophers, who sensed the existence of this power admitted that it lay beyond the range of human reason. Well might they despair of its discovery by natural means for it is a product of the Holy Spirit.

The word used to render the term is "love," but it has adopted so many implications and taken on so many diverse connotations it seems ineffective. *Agape* is not an emotion. It is not a mere expression of affection. It is the act of a will that is fully committed to the divine purpose. It is a response to a divine sharing. "We love because he first loved us." It is not a demonstration of love for that which is lovable, but for the unlovable. It is not limited to those who agree with us or who see things as we do. It embraces our enemies and those who agree with us or who see things as we do. It embraces our enemies and those who despitefully use us. But just as God's *agape* for an alien world, expressed in the sacrifice of Jesus, battered down walls of partition, so that same triumphant force can today overcome all barriers.

We suggest as a fertile field for future research the nature and properties of *agape*. Neglect of this has reduced us to the pitiable condition in which our tragic shame is exhibited to a scoffing world. A recapture of *agape* will again make it possible for us to conquer the world for Jesus. When Christians were regarded as on the level of beasts fit only to be slain for the entertainment of the cruel, sadistic Roman populace, it was not their doctrine nor their philosophy which melted the hearts of their captors. Those who filled the arena for the gladiatorial spectacles, and who watched without a tremor as blood ran like water, could not withstand the power of *agape*. "Behold how these love one another." This was the word whispered through the stands and those who saw *agape* demonstrated before their eyes returned home awed and shaken by the experience. That same power can again move the forces of neo-paganism in our generation!

But the subject of *agape* deserves a fuller treatment and a better description than we can give it here, so we desist from further discussion now with the hope that we shall be able to develop the theme more fully at another time. "And now, brethren, we commend you unto God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified."

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